N° 16

A DISCOURSE ON THE NATURE, DESIGN, *and* BENEFITS OF CONFIRMATION.

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LONDON:
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ON THE

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and BENEFITS

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TO THE

INHABITANTS

OF THE

Pariſh of *Lambeth.*

My BRETHREN,



THE following Diſcourſe *is the abridgment or ſubſtance of two* Sermons, *that have been lately delivered to you from the pulpit. It was publiſhed above* ten *years ago, and then addreſſed to the* Inhabitants *of the other* Pariſh, *whereof I have the care. For the ſame reaſons it is now dedicated to your uſe, and in hopes, that it may be of as much ſervice to you as them; not only as it will be a proper* preparation *of young perſons for the approaching* confirmation: *but as* you *will thus be* always *put in* remembrance *of what you have heard*

from your Minister, concerning a very wise In-
stitution, which has often thro' misunderstandin
or superstition been so much abused, as not onl
to lose all good effects in the Christian *Church*
but to be neglected and despised. Nor can i
ever be retrieved to its antient reverence or
usefulness, without the sincere endeavours of all
who are in any capacity intrusted with the charg
of Children *and* Servants.

Such therefore among you, my Brethren, *I*
must intreat, for the honour of God, *and th*
welfare of his Church, *to make it your seriou*
and constant care to oblige your families to re-
member their Creator in the days of thei
youth; *to improve in them their natural prin-*
ciples of religion and truth, of righteousness, an
charity; to fill their minds with just and ho-
nourable thoughts of the privilege of being mad
Members of *Christ,* Children of *God, and* In-
heritors of the Kingdom of Heaven: *And t*
instruct them fully in all the obligations of th
Christian *Covenant, which they engaged to per-*
form by their sureties in Baptism. *And whe*
they are thus qualified, you must bring them, a
years of discretion, *to the* Bishop, *that the*
may take these obligations deliberately and solemn-
ly upon themselves before him, *and then receiv*
the blessing of his prayers *thro' the* laying on o
hands, *as the regular means for imploring an*
obtainin

obtaining thoſe manifold gifts of grace, which will confirm and eſtabliſh their minds in faith and virtue, that by continuance in well-doing *they may obtain everlaſting life; for, to ſpeak to you in the words of a judicious* Prelate, *now with* God *, "*I am fully ſatisfied, that the* "*neglect of this, as it is apparently the cauſe* "*why ſo many grow up among us to the years of* "*men and women, nay, ſometimes to old age,* "*without ever thinking themſelves obliged to par-* "*take of the* Lord's Supper: *ſo it is one great* "*and evident cauſe of the general decay of* Chriſ- "tian *faith and piety among us.*"

As to thoſe among you who intend to offer themſelves for Confirmation, *I muſt earneſtly deſire, and charge them to come with the moſt* ſerious *and* religious *diſpoſition of mind; that they may every one anſwer with* judgment, *as well as* diſtinctly *and* audibly, *to that ſolemn and important queſtion the* Biſhop *puts to them,* Do you here in the preſence of God, and of this congregation? *&c. Let me alſo prevail with them to go thro' the whole office, not only with the moſt* decent *and* quiet *behaviour, but with a ſpirit of true* devotion; *attending to every prayer, ſaying* Amen *to it, and remaining all together in the* Church, *without any diſorderly*

* Biſhop *Bradford.*

noiſe

noiſe *or* confuſion, *till the whole duty is over and they are diſmiſſed with the ſolemn* Benediction *of the* Biſhop.

If you conſcientiouſly *attend to the* doctrine *of this diſcourſe, and* carefully *obſerve the* rules, *you will find, that this office thus* regularly *performed is not a matter of mere* form *and outward* ceremony, *but an effectual* means, *by the grace of* GOD, *for promoting* true *Piety and Virtue.*

May the good providence of GOD *watch over, preſerve, and proſper you in every part and calling of life: and may his* Holy Spirit be ever with you, *to bleſs with ſucceſs this, and all other my endeavours for your good; that ſo you may be* built up *in* Chriſtian *Knowledge and Practice, and thereby be made* meet to be partakers of an *eternal* Inheritance among all them which are ſanctified!

Theſe are the daily and fervent Prayers of him, *who is, with all* truth *and* love *in* CHRIST JESUS,

Your moſt affectionate Brother,
Faithful Friend, and
Humble Servant,

LAMBETH,
April 5. 1737.

JOHN DENNI

ACTS XIX. 5, 6.

5. *When they heard this, they were baptized in the name of the Lord* Jesus.
6. *And when* Paul *had laid his hands upon them, the Holy Ghost came on them: and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

THE sacred Historian has recorded in my text a very remarkable action of St. *Paul*, who had *the care of all the churches*, and was daily busied in the great work of *confirming* them, or of adding to their number by *fully preaching the Gospel* of Christ (as far as in him lay) unto the ends of the world. In one of his travels upon these important errands he *came to* Ephesus, (Ver. 1.) where *finding certain disciples*, he enquired of them, whether since their conversion they had *received* the miraculous gifts, and powers of the *Holy Ghost: and they said unto him, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost*, (Ver. 2.) Hereupon he farther asks them, (Ver. 3.) *Unto what then were ye baptized?* Christian *Baptism* being always administer'd *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost* *. Their answer was, *Unto John's Baptism*; which, tho' it obliged them to repentance, conveyed none of the gifts and powers

* Matth. xxviii. 19.

of

of the *Holy Ghost*. St. *Paul* therefore gave them fully to understand, that *John the Baptist*, tho' a *Prophet of the Highest*, was only a *Messenger* sent on purpose to *give knowledge of salvation unto his people*, and to *prepare* the *way* by his preaching, and the *Baptism of repentance* for their admission into the *kingdom of heaven*, which *Christ Jesus* had then opened, and wherein all were obliged to enter, according to the express declaration of *John* himself: *I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance; but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the* Holy Ghost, *and with fire* †.

These Proselytes, or Disciples of St. *John*, being convinced by the reasoning of St. *Paul*, and already prepared by the necessary qualifications of repentance and faith, for *Christian Baptism*, were immediately, as my text informs us, *baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus*, and thus intitled to the peculiar privileges of his Religion. But to give them a miraculous earnest or assurance of this blessing, the Apostle *laid his hands upon them*, and *the* Holy Ghost *came on them, and they spake with tongues, and prophesied.*

This is the history of my text; and from this action of St. *Paul*, supported by some other passages in Scripture, it is easy to trace the rise of *Confirmation*, or of the Bishops *laying* their *hands* on persons who have been already baptized; a practice that has been of constant use in the Church of *Christ*. — But how far this action of St. *Paul*, or any other passage in Scripture, is a good ground for, and will justify us in, or oblige us to the use of this solemn rite, shall be considered in this discourse; wherein I propose,

† Matth. iii. 11.

I. First

I. First, To explain to you the nature and design of *Confirmation*, or *laying on of hands* after Baptism.
II. To lay before you the several obligations we are under to comply with this institution and custom.
III. To open to you the particular benefits of it.
IV. To shew you what qualifications are requisite in all persons, who come to be *confirmed*.
V. and Lastly, I shall apply myself to you by an exhortation most suitable to the present occasion of our meeting.

I. First, I am to explain to you the nature and design of *Confirmation*, or *laying on of hands* after Baptism. The general ceremony of *laying on of hands* is, we are sure, at least as antient as the times of *Israel*, who upon his death-bed *laid his hands* upon the children of *Joseph*, and thus bequeathed unto them the real blessing of his prayers *: and therefore we may safely pronounce it at first sight, and in itself, innocent and free from superstition, since it was used by the best of men, in the most simple and purest ages of religion. From the *Patriarchs* it descended to their posterity, and grew into so common a practice among the *Jews*, that they never failed to use this rite in ordering their Priesthood, and setting apart their Magistracy †: And it was thus that parents implored the divine blessing on their children. Our blessed Saviour also was a strict observer of this custom. *He put his hands upon young children, and blessed them* ‡. Nay, he used it so frequently in healing diseases, that *the ruler of the Synagogue* might well say unto him, *My daughter is even now dead: but come, and lay thy hand upon her, and she shall live* ||. No wonder then, that after the

* Gen. xlviii. 14.
† Numb. viii. 10. Deut. xxxiv. 9.
‡ Mark x. 16.
|| Matt. ix. 18. Mark xvi. 18.
Acts xxviii. 8.

excellent example of their Maſter, it became a con
ſtant practice among the *Apoſtles*, to *lay their hand*
upon the ſick, that they might recover; and thus to ſ
apart perſons to different offices and employments i
the Church *: and by this means to convey unto b
lievers the miraculous gifts of the *Holy Ghoſt* men
tioned in my text, and in other parts of their hiſto
ry. What juſt offence therefore can ſo plain an
innocent a ceremony, when uſed by the Governo
of our Church, give to the weakeſt, or moſt ſcru
pulous Chriſtian? Or how can it be looked upon
ſuperſtitious, or *popiſh*? Nay, muſt it not be fit an
wiſe ſtill to continue it on the like occaſions, as th
Patriarchs, *Moſes*, the *Prophets* and *Apoſtles*, an
even the *Son of God* himſelf uſed it.

Thus much is ſufficient to be ſaid in general upo
the ceremony of *laying on of hands*, which our Chur
retains in its moſt ſolemn offices of *conſecrating Biſhop*
and of *ordering Prieſts and Deacons*; as alſo in *co*
firming perſons, which is the point I am more part
cularly to ſpeak to. *Confirmation* then, as it is no
in uſe, is that rite, whereby thoſe who ha
been baptized (moſt of them in their infancy) are
years of diſcretion taken into compleat communi
with the catholick and viſible Church. Now as th
children of believers are, on account of their inn
cence, and of the relation they bear to Chriſti
parents, admitted by baptiſm to the privilege of b
ing "members of Chriſt, children of God, and i
"heritors of the kingdom of heaven"; but on
upon the credit of their Sureties, who ſpeak a
engage, as far as they can, for their performing t
neceſſary conditions of the Chriſtian Covenant:
hence it muſt be evident, that theſe baptized ch
dren, when grown up, being ripe in their judgme
and underſtanding, ſhould take upon themſelves t

* Acts xiii. 3. 1 Tim. iv. 14. v. 22. Acts vi. 6.

vo

vows of faith, repentance, and obedience, and perform all thoſe conditions of the Goſpel, to which they ſtood obliged by their ſpiritual Sureties and Guardians. They ſhould, as directed in the *Office* of *Confirmation*, "with their own mouth and conſent, "openly before the Church, ratify and confirm what "was promiſed for them in baptiſm;" and at the ſame time publickly profeſs, "that by the grace of "God they will evermore endeavour themſelves "faithfully to obſerve ſuch things, as they by their "own confeſſion do then aſſent to". After which the Biſhop ſolemnly prays to God to ſtrengthen them in theſe good reſolutions, and then *lays his hands upon them*, to *certify them by this ſign*, that they are the peculiar ſubject of his prayers, and that the inеſtimable privileges of baptiſm are ſealed anew, and ſecured to them, and that *God's Holy Spirit will be ever with them*, to make them Chriſtians in deed, as well as word, and to *lead them* in the paths of truth and virtue, *that in the end they may obtain everlaſting life.*

This is a plain account of *Confirmation*, as it is practiſed in our Church; and I dare appeal to the moſt prejudiced againſt it, whether it be not a rite *moſt convenient to be obſerved:* nay, whether it is not morally neceſſary to edification and good order, that none ſhould be admitted to compleat communion with us, till they have by their own free choice and deed diſcharged their Sureties, and given ſufficient and publick proof, upon due examination, that they underſtand the duties and principles of Chriſtianity, and that they are firmly reſolved to live at all times ſuitably to their knowledge. And upon ſo doing the *Biſhop* would, I think, neglect the duties of his office, if he was not ſolemnly to pray over them, that God would *ſeal* and defend them *with his holy Spirit of promiſe*, and then admit them into full communion by *laying on his hands*, which is an an-

tient and almoſt natural ceremony to point out th perſon ſo prayed over, and admitted. And th *Confirmation* might be ſure to carry with it ſuitabl impreſſions of its importance, and of ſerious rega and reverence, the exerciſe of it has always been re ſtrained to the higheſt order of Miniſters in th Church *, according to the example of St. *Pete* and St. *John*, who were ſent unto *Samaria* by the *A poſtles*, on purpoſe that they who had *received th word of God* by the miniſtry of *Philip*, a *Deacon* an *Evangeliſt*, might by *prayer*, and thro' *laying on* thoſe Apoſtles *hands*, *receive the Holy Ghoſt*. B this reminds me of the

IId head of my diſcourſe, wherein I am to la before you the ſeveral obligations we are under comply with this inſtitution and cuſtom. And o obligations to it do ariſe from ſcripture, authorit and reaſon.

1. From Scripture. And here I ſhall not inſi upon thoſe doubtful texts, which many of the F thers, and other learned men, in their zeal for *Co firmation*, have been thought almoſt to force into i ſervice: but ſhall only quote thoſe which are pla and expreſs for the original of this rite. And th firſt we have is that already hinted at, *Acts* viii. 1 where we read that *Peter* and *John* were ſent un *Samaria*, *who when they were come down, prayed f* the Converts made and baptized by *Philip*; and *th they laid their hands on them, and they received t Holy Ghoſt.* (*For as yet he was fallen upon none them: only they were baptized in the name of the Lo Jeſus.*) And in my text, we find that St. *Paul la his hands* upon thoſe whom he had firſt *baptized the name of the Lord Jeſus:* and then *the Holy Gh*

* *This will be evident from thoſe quotations I ſhall make un the next head*

ca

me on them, and they ſpake with tongues, and pro-
heſied. Nay, ſo conſtant a practice was it among
he Apoſtles to confirm men after *baptiſm* by the *lay-*
ng on of hands, that theſe two things are therefore
oined together, *Heb.* vi. 2. and reckoned by the
acred Writer of that Epiſtle among the *principles*
r foundations of the doctrine of Chriſt, as being al-
ways neceſſary in his Church.

Againſt theſe Precedents from Scripture, I know
othing to be objected, unleſs it be that the *laying*
n of hands was in thoſe early ages accompanied with
xtraordinary gifts of the *Holy Ghoſt*, which mani-
feſted themſelves in immediate and ſenſible effects,
uch as the *ſpeaking with tongues*, *propheſying*, and
working miracles: But ſince the ends, for which ſo
urpriſing effuſions of that Spirit were firſt given, are
ccompliſhed; there can now be no reaſon or warrant
o continue the practice of *laying on of hands*, nor
ught we to believe or preſume, that we can by this
eans receive the Holy Ghoſt, ſince there appear no
uch ſigns that it ever *comes upon us.*

This is the full force of the objection; and my
nſwer to it is, That as the *Holy Ghoſt* is to *abide*
ith the Chriſtian Church, even unto the end of the
orld, * *for the promiſe of it is unto* us, *and to* our
hildren, and to all that are afar off, even as many as
e Lord our God ſhall call: ſo it is reaſonable to think,
nd exactly agreeable to the divine oeconomy and
nſtitutions in the Scripture to believe, that as the
poſtles could by their *prayers*, and the *laying on of*
nds, bring down the miraculous gifts of the *Holy*
hoſt upon baptized Converts, in full proportion to
e extraordinary exigencies of thoſe times; ſo
ught the *Biſhops* of the Church, on whom devolved
e chief authority and care after the deceaſe of the
poſtles, in conformity to their example, to *pray*

* Acts ii. 39.

over

over, and *lay hands upon* all, who have been initia
into the Church by *Baptiſm*, when they firſt co
to make a publick profeſſion of their Chriſtian o
gations. And tho' it would be Enthuſiaſm in th
days to expect that they ſhould all become *Proph*
or *ſpeak with tongues*; yet God, no doubt, will
nex his bleſſing to the uſe of the ſame external
dinance; he will *give the Holy Spirit to them t*
ask him, and beſtow ſuch plentiful effuſions of
ward and ſanctifying grace, as will have a laſt
influence on the minds and manners of thoſe w
are confirmed, enabling them to be as eminent in ev
kind of virtue, as Chriſtians generally were in
firſt ages of the Goſpel. Nor is it material to u
that ſuch effects of the *Spirit* are not certain fr
the *laying on of hands*, becauſe they are
ſenſible; ſince we know not that we have
Spirit at all, * (the *earneſt* of which is *in*
hearts) unleſs by the influences and *fruits* of
which, according to St. *Paul*, *are in all goodn*
righteouſneſs, and truth †. Such is the evidence
Scripture for the rite of *Confirmation*: But wa
doubtful in the caſe, I could ſupport it by moſt
queſtionable Authorities. For we can

2*dly*, Plead that it hath been a *ſolemn, anti*
and laudable cuſtom in the Church of God, foun
upon theſe Precedents in Scripture, and *contin*
from the Apoſtles times. But the Canons, and Quo
tions from the Fathers ‡ upon this point are too

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* 2 Cor. i. 22.

† Eph. v. 9.

‡ *I may appeal to all, who are converſant in the*
thers, *to bear me witneſs, that they do almoſt one and all vouc*
the conſtant uſe of Confirmation, *and juſtify ſuch uſe from the*
ample and practice of the Apoſtles; *ſo that I ſhall only cite o*
two remarkable paſſages. The firſt is in St. Cyprian's *Epiſt*
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to bring within the compaſs of one Sermon: or they were not ſo, I ſhould chuſe to omit them, owing that the buſineſs of a Preacher in popular courſes is not to vaunt of great learning in himſelf, but to ſuit what he has to the capacity, and ſtruction of every hearer.

It will be ſufficient therefore for me to obſerve, t it is in the power of every National Church to *ree rites and ceremonies*: And a moderate one it is hich the Church of *England* exerts, when ſhe enins all ſuch as have been baptized in their infancy, d to whom Sureties were then allowed, to come at competent age before the *Biſhop*, and in their own me to renew their *baptiſmal* vows in the publick ngregation, with all ſeriouſneſs and ſolemnity; d to receive the bleſſing of his prayers to God ro' the *laying on of hands* for the gift of his Holy

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ianus, *where mentioning the ſtory of St.* Peter, *and St.* John's *en to* Samaria, *and their conferring the Holy Ghoſt on* Philip's *ers by the* laying on of hands, *he adds*, Quod nunc quoq; d nos geritur, ut qui in Eccleſiâ baptizantur, præpoſitis cleſiæ offerantur, & per noſtram *orationem, ac manus impoſi-* ſpiritum ſanctum conſequantur, & ſignaculo Dominico ſummentur. Tertullian *alſo declares that after Baptiſm*, Maimponitur, per benedictionem advocans, & invitans ſpium ſanctum. *De Baptiſm. c.* 8.——*I ſhall mention but one ance more, tho' that of great weight, as it proves the concurrence the* Hereticks *and* Orthodox *in this point. You may meet with in St.* Jerom's *Dialogue with a* Luciferian, *who thus attacks* : An neſcis etiam Eccleſiarum hunc eſſe morem, ut bapatis poſtea *manus imponantur*, & ita invocetur Spiritus nctus? Exigis, ubi ſcriptum ſit? in Actibus Apoſtolorum. tiamſi Scripturæ autoritas non ſubeſſet, totius orbis in hanc rtem conſenſus inſtar præcepti obtineret. *The learned* Faer, *who was never accuſed of advancing* Epiſcopal *power to an juſtifiable or unprecedented height, joins iſſue with his antagoniſt, d thus replies:* Non quidem abnuo hanc eſſe Eccleſiarum nſuetudinem, ut ad eos, qui longè in minoribus urbibus per resbyteros, & Diaconos baptizati ſunt, *Epiſcopus* ad invocaonem Spiritus ſancti *manum impoſiturus* excurrat.

Spirit

Spirit to enable them to perform those vows. this action sure there is nothing, but what the G vernors in every Church may justify, without other warrant than that from St. *Paul*, *Let all th be done decently and in order, and to godly edifying* And according to this reasonable rule, there was in *Jewish* Church a custom much resembling *Confirma on*; for they were wont to bring their Children bef ten chosen Persons, as soon as they had learned duties of their Law, and their daily prayers; whe upon they were declared *Sons* of the *Precept*: A henceforth they were to answer for their own s for which the Parents before, and not their Childr had been accountable; and then the rite ended w prayer and praises †.

And here it may be proper to remark, that practice of the *Christian* Church has varied, as to circumstances of *Confirmation*, and that of old time ceremonies of it were more and different, both in *Eastern* and *Western* Churches: But as they o meant one and the same good thing, they may am sure, with safety, and as I think, with prude be omitted; since every Church, in case of *Cere nies*, can best judge for her self what will most t to *godly edifying*: And since thus the Church *England* can give no just occasion of offence to th who dissent from her communion, whilst she only tains Prayer, and *the laying on of hands*, a plain and nificant ceremony, which comes recommended our use by the divine warrant both of the *Old* & *New* Testament.

This kind of *Confirmation* therefore (was there authority to countenance it) seems to me so us in the Church of Christ, that on this account al

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* 1 Cor. xiv. 40, 26. 1 Tim. i. 4.

† *See* Buxtorf. Synagog. Judaic. c. 7.

ought to be entertained among us. And this was e judgment of many among the firſt *Reformers* *, ho' their Churches threw it out on account of its buſe, or becauſe they reteined not the *Epiſcopal* rm of Government among them. Nay, *Calvin* †, a man

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* *I here add ſome few quotations from their writings, that the reader may have a ſpecimen of their judgment: Thus* M. Luther, *tho' he allows not* Confirmation *to be a Sacrament, yet eſteems it* ritus quidam Eccleſiaſticus, ſeu ceremonia ſacramentalis. *de captiv. Babylon. cap. de Confirm. But* Melanchthon *goes farther in his confeſſion of the Churches of* Germany, *written i the year* 1551. *he exhibited to the Council of* Trent: In ritu *Confirmationis* fiebat exploratio doctrinæ, in quâ ſinguli recitabant ſummam doctrinæ, & palam profitebantur velle ſe eſſe, & manere Eccleſiæ membra, & non diſceſſuros à verâ ſententiâ, quam tum profitebantur. Hic mos erat utilis ad erudiendos homines, & retinendos in verâ agnitione Dei. Zuinglius *ſeems to make* ſo *as great antiquity and neceſſity in the Church as* Infant-Baptiſm, *affirming,* *Confirmatio* tum ſumpſit exordium, quum vulgo ceptum eſt infantes tingi. *De ver. & falſ. Relig.* Chemnitius *alſo confeſſeth, that when it is ſcoured from the ruſt of Superſtition, and uſed in the manner we uſe it:* Talis ritus *Confirmationis* olde multum utilitatis ad ædificationem juventutis, & totius Eccleſiæ conferret; eſſet etiam conſentaneus & ſcripturæ, & priori antiquitati. *Exam. Conc. Trident. Cap.* 2. *So that* Bulinger *might well put up this wiſh,* Atq; utinam hæc poſtlimio ad nos redeat *manuum impoſitio,* ritus ſanctiſſimus, juxta & utiliſſimus. *In* 6. *ad Hebræos.*

† *Altho' the declarations of* Calvin *upon this point are well known, and often quoted, yet I chuſe to tranſcribe them here, that he may appear together with his Brethren.* Liberi fidelium, quoniam ab ævo adoptati erant, & jure promiſſionis pertinebant ad corpus Eccleſiæ, Infantes baptizabantur: tranſactâ verò Infantiâ, poſtquam inſtituti erant in fide, ſe quoq; ad Catechesin offerebant, quæ in illis Baptiſmo erat inferior, ſed aliud ſymbolum tunc adhibebatur, nempe *manum impoſitio.* Hic unus locus abunde teſtatur hujus ceremoniæ originem fluxiſſe ab *Apoſtolis,* quæ tamen poſtea in ſuperſtitionem verſa fuit: ſic mundus ſemper fere ab optimis inſtitutis ad corruptelas degenerat.——Quamobrem hodie retinenda pura inſtitutio ſit, ſuperſtitio autem corrigenda. Atq; hic locus ad Pædobaptiſmi approbationem facit. *Calvin. Comm. in* Heb. vi. 2.

a man as rigid in his notions as any, and a mo zealous oppoſer of *Prelatical* authority, freely own that this was the conſtant practice of the Chriſti Church, commends it, and wiſhes it was reſtor'd, it is among us, in its primitive ſimplicity, unmix with the ſuperſtitious follies of *Popery*, and atten ed only with the antient and almoſt natural ſign perſonal benediction and prayer, *the laying on hands*. So that without the authority of the *Scr ptures*, *Councils*, *Fathers*, the *Church*, or *Reformer* the very reaſon and nature of the thing itſelf muſt

3*dly*, and laſtly, Commend it to the judgmen and the uſe of every ſerious and unprejudiced *Chr ſtian*, juſt as in the caſe already mentioned of a *Je iſh* ordinance. For is it not highly reaſonable, na does not the univerſal practice of *Infant-Baptiſ* make it neceſſary, that they who never gave an actual conſent of their own to the conditions of th Chriſtian Covenant, ſhould have a publick opportu nity offered them to come, and take thoſe obligati ons upon themſelves, which their Sureties contrac ed for them to their infinite advantage? For th time between *Baptiſm* and *Confirmation* is only a pro per ſeaſon for their inſtruction in the principles religion: as ſoon therefore as they have a reaſonabl

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And again, in his Inſtitutions, *l.* 4 *c.* 19. §. 4. Hic. mo olim fuit, ut Chriſtianorum liberi, poſtquam adoleverant coram *Epiſcopo* ſiſterentur: ut officium illud implerent, quo ab iis exigebatur qui ſe ad Baptiſmum adulti offerebant. H enim inter *Catechumenos* ſedebant, donec rite fidei myſteri inſtituti poterant fidei confeſſionem coram *Epiſcopo* ac *popu edere*. —— Quo autem hæc actio, quæ alioqui gravis, ſanctaq merito eſſe debebat, plus reverentiæ haberet, & dignitatis ceremonia quoq; adhibebatur *manuum impoſitionis*. Ita puer ille, fide ſuâ approbatâ, cum ſolenni benedictione dimitteba tur.——Talem ergo *manuum impoſitionem*, quæ ſimpliciter lo co benedictionis fiat, laudo, & reſtitutam hodie in purum uſum velim.

ſenſe

ſenſe and underſtanding of them, they ſhould publickly ſet at liberty thoſe perſons, who in kindneſs to them undertook for their *Chriſtian* education; they ſhould renew, "ratify, and confirm with their "own mouth and conſent, openly before the Church, "thoſe vows and promiſes", which were made for them by their *Godfathers* and *Godmothers* in Baptiſm: "and *alſo promiſe* (imploring the grace of God) "that they will evermore endeavour themſelves "faithfully to obſerve ſuch things, as they by their "own confeſſion do aſſent to.". Nothing doubtleſs can be more reaſonable, or more conducive to the intereſts of religion and virtue, than ſuch an inſtitution, which would effectually prevent that coldneſs and deadneſs in religion, which proceeds from mens taking up the profeſſion of it in courſe, without a due preparation and diſpoſition of mind: For to uſe the words of a moſt excellent and judicious *Prelate* of our Church *; "Thoſe declarations and "promiſes, which are made by others, being only "intended to ſupply the preſent want of underſtanding in Infants, cannot be ſuppoſed to ſuffice "longer, than ſuch want of underſtanding continues; which ſhews how fit and proper it is, that "Children ſhould make the ſame declarations for "themſelves, and in their own perſons, as ſoon as "they come to a competent age and knowledge. "Their being then unable to make them, was the "only reaſon why they were not required to make "them in perſon; and if they had been able, and "yet had refus'd to make them, they could not "have been receiv'd into covenant at all. If therethere after they are grown to maturity, and are "able, they neglect to inform themſelves in the "Chriſtian Religion, and refuſe to make proper

* *Biſhop of* London *of Confirmation.*

" declarations of faith and obedience, this looks to
" like a renouncing a covenant that was made fo
" them, and a giving up their title to the benefi
" of it". But the reasonableness of complyin
with this institution will appear more fully fro
my

IIId general head, wherein I am to open to yo
the particular benefits of *Confirmation*. And,

1*st*, We have reason to believe, that we may d
rive hereby such communications of grace from th
Holy Ghost, as are ordinarily requisite for securin
all the privileges and advantages of our Baptism
Covenant, for enlightening and sanctifying our soul
and for leading us thro' the course of our lives in th
knowledge and obedience of God's word. For
were easy to prove from Scripture, that prayers a
the common means appointed to obtain the grac
of God's Spirit: and that according to St. *James*
the effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avai
eth much, as well for others as himself; especial
when it is offered up to God by those, whom the
relation and calling do bind above others to this du
ty, being *ordained* to minister *for men in things pe*
taining to God, for the perfecting of the Saints, an
for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come
the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of t
Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure
the stature of the fulness of Christ †. When therefo
the *Bishops* and *Pastors* of the Church are diligent
attending so *edifying* a work of their ministry,
Confirmation is, and religiously follow the examp
of the Apostle in my text, God will no doubt r
ceive and answer those devout and solemn applicat
ons, which they make to him in the publick congr

* Jam. v. 16.

† Eph. iv. 12.

gatio

gation of his people; for *this is the confidence that* they, according to St. *John* ‡, may *have in him*, that since they *ask according to his will*, *he heareth* them. Whence we may fairly conclude, that *Prayer*, and the *laying on of hands* by *Biſhops* in *Confirmation*, if received with the ſame preparation and reverence, will be as *effectual* now to confirm young perſons in virtue, to increaſe in them the manifold gifts of grace, and to enable them to attain to thoſe degrees of holineſs and perfection, which *become the Goſpel of Chriſt*: as they were in the days of the *Apoſtles* themſelves, to transform men, who were juſt baptized, from inveterate habits of vice, to confound by the force of miracles the oppoſition of the devil, and to *ſpeak with tongues*, *and propheſy*, which were at that time neceſſary gifts to prove the divine origin and authority of their Religion.

But here it may be asked, Is it not poſſible for Children, who are *regenerated* in *Baptiſm* by the *Holy Ghoſt*, to receive at riper years, without the *laying on of hands*, "the ſpirit of wiſdom and underſtanding, the ſpirit of counſel and ghoſtly ſtrength, the ſpirit of knowledge and true godlineſs, and to be filled with the Spirit of God's holy fear". God forbid, that we ſhould hold *Confirmation* * to be ſo

‡ 1 Joh. v. 14.

* *The Church of* Rome, *without ſufficient warrant from Scripture, has advanced the rite* Confirmation *into a Sacrament, and decrees, that none are compleat Chriſtians without it; tho' even her Doctors (at leaſt of late Years, and perhaps for politick reaſons) do not maintain it to be neceſſary to Salvation. But the* Antients *never deemed it a diſtinct Sacrament from Baptiſm, nor of abſolute neceſſity to Salvation: but only as a proper and precedented mean to receive from God, at riper years, an increaſe of thoſe manifold gifts of grace, which are requiſite to ſtrengthen and ſupport us in our Chriſtian warfare: and therefore they thought baptized perſons to be in no hazard as to their future ſtate, nor to have any thing to anſwer for to God,*

ſo eſſential to ſalvation, as that we ſhould exclu
from it, or from ſupplies of divine grace, all w
do not ſeek, or receive it in this particular w
For as † *the wind bloweth where it liſteth, and th
heareſt the ſound thereof; but cannot tell whence
cometh, and whither it goeth: ſo is every one that
born* and governed *of the ſpirit.* God, no queſtio
may *have mercy on whom he will have mercy*, and
may beſtow the bleſſings of his ſpirit on whom, a
in what manner he pleaſeth. All that I inſiſt up
is this, that *Prayer* with *Epiſcopal laying on of han
is the ordinary, the regular, and ſafeſt means to r
ceive that ſupply of grace, which is covenanted fo
and promiſed to us in *Baptiſm*; and therefore
one ought to ſlight or neglect it, but to uſe it, wh
he can have it, as exactly agreeable to the divi
oeconomy and inſtitutions in the Goſpel, and
good hope, that the bleſſing of God, and a ſpec
portion of grace from the *Spirit of Promiſe* will a
company this rite, which is alſo recommended to
by antiquity, authority, and reaſon *. All your
Chriſt

God, if they ſhould die before a convenient opportunity for their Co
firmation *offered itſelf. The Council of* Eliberis *made an expr
Canon to this purpoſe.* (Can. 77.) *The Church of* England *al
to prevent the bringing of Children to* Confirmation, *who are
qualified for it on account of their age or underſtanding, declar
That it is certeyne by God's word, that Children being bap
zed (yf they depart out of this life in their infancy) are a
be undoubtedly ſaved. 2 & 5 Ed. 6.*

† John iii. 8.

* Tertullian *firſt declares this to be a received opinion, and th
defends it.* Dehinc manus imponitur, per benedictionem a
vocans & invitans ſpiritum ſanctum, *&c. De Baptiſm. c.
And again,* Caro manûs impoſitione adumbratur, ut & anim
ſpiritu illuminetur. *De reſurrect. carn. cap.* 8. Chryſoſto
alſo in his Hom. on Hebrews, *c. 6. v. 2. obſerves upon the arti
of* laying on of hands, οὔτω γὰρ τὸ πνεῦμα ἐλάμβανον. *And i
deed the* Fathers *ſeldom mention the* laying on of hands *with
th*

hriſtians therefore are under * a ſtrict obligation
attend upon their *Biſhop*, when he comes, as in
ty bound by the example of the *Apoſtles*, to *lay his*
nds upon them, and *pray over* them, as the regular
d appointed means, whereby to be admitted into
ll communion with the Church, and to receive
oſe manifold gifts of grace, which will carry them
ith ſucceſs thro' their Chriſtian warfare, until they
me unto an everlaſting kingdom of glory. But
ſides the bleſſing of heavenly Grace, there are
her benefits that attend on *Confirmation*; for it
ill

2*dly*, Oblige Parents to be moſt careful in the edu-
tion of their Children, and alſo Children to make
e beſt improvements they can ‡. As for Parents,
s a publick enquiry to be made into the proficien-

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effect; *ſo that* Grotius *might well make this remark upon the text*; Nam manus imponebantur & baptizatis ad obtidam vim *confirmantem* ſpiritus ſancti. *Agreeable to this is judgment of the Church of* England *in the* 2 *and* 5 *of* Edw. 6. *firmation* is miniſtred to them that be baptized, that by *poſition of hands and prayer* they may receive ſtrength and ence againſt all temptations to ſin, and the aſſaults of the ld and the devil.

* *The* Antients *therefore ſet marks of diſgrace and publick cen- upon ſuch as voluntarily and careleſly omitted* Confirmation, *n they had an opportunity to receive it. As in the caſe of* No- ian *recorded in* Euſeb. Eccl. Hiſt. l. 6. c. 43.

‡ Calvin's *judgment in this caſe is very remarkable, who ſpeak- of the duties of* catechizing *and* confirming, *declares thus in ur of both:* Utinam morem retineremus, quem apud vete- fuiſſe admonui.——Hæc diſciplina ſi hodiè valeret, pro- o parentum quorundam ignavia acueretur, qui liberorum itutionem quaſi rem nihil ad ſe pertinentem, ſecurè neg- nt, quam tum ſine publico dedecore omittere non poſſent: or eſſet in populo Chriſtiano fidei conſenſus, nec tanta torum inſcitia, & ruditas; non adeo temere quidam novis, peregrinis dogmatibus abriperentur; omnibus denique eſ- quædam velut methodus doctrinæ Chriſtianæ. *Calvin. Inſt.* cap. 19. §. 13.

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cy of their Children, they would not suffer the
for their own honour, to be ignorant at their rip
years of the first principles of religion, and to kno
little or nothing of those duties, whereon their eve
lasting happiness entirely depends. And as for your
persons, were they sure to undergo an open exam
nation of their faith and knowledge, they wou
give all diligence to prepare themselves for it, th
they may appear with the credit they ought, a
not as * *Children in understanding*; so that *when for t
time* they *ought to be teachers*, they *have need th
one teach them again, which be the first principles
the oracles of God*: and are become *Babes in Chri
being such as have need of milk, and not of stro
meat* †. This would be such a disgrace and scand
to them, that they would scorn to bear it, if not
conscience, yet for reputation sake. And were you
thus brought up in the fear of God, and an ea
knowledge of their duty to him; were they acc
stomed betimes to consider and reflect upon the n
ture of their Baptismal Vow; was every corru
and irregular appetite or passion brought at first in
reasonable order; had the duties and promises of t
Gospel an early possession of their judgments a
affections: and were they always called upon in t
solemn and publick manner I have been speaking
to profess their faith, and to dedicate themsel
with free choice, and a zealous disposition of mi
to the service of God; they would, in all hum
probability, prove earnest and serious in the Prof
sion of Christianity, and solicitous never to cont
dict their profession by their lives, but having th
named the name of Christ, they would ever after
part from all *iniquity* ‡. For they would then

* 1 Cor. xiv. 20.
† Heb. v. 12.
‡ 2 Tim. ii. 19.

der the ſtrongeſt engagements to lead a chriſtian ife; and the vows and promiſes they once made penly, in the preſence of God, and before his Church, would leave ſo deep impreſſions on their nſciences, as to be laſting admonitions and checks nto them, not to falſify their promiſes, and break heir vows, but to take conſtant heed that their nverſation be, *as becometh the Goſpel of Chriſt* *.

Moreover, thoſe reſolutions which are founded n reaſon and diſcernment, and taken up in a pub-ck and ſolemn manner, not for form or cuſtom, ot raſhly and inconſiderately: but after mature hought, upon a thorough conviction of mind, and pon a firm and a well-ſettled belief of the great ruths of religion; ſuch reſolutions, I ſay, as theſe re, ſeldom dye in the mind, but remain as active rinciples in every condition of life, and are thoſe eeds from which alone we are to expect a glorious arveſt, the excellent fruits of every moral virtue, nd chriſtian grace. But ſhould they be blaſted for while by the heats of youth, the allurements of enſe, or the love of the world; yet they generally pring forth and revive again, as ſoon as age or ca-mities ſuggeſt ſerious thoughts, which conſcience ell exerciſed at firſt with the fear of Almighty God, nd inſtructed in the principles of the Goſpel will ot fail to improve, and to *bring forth fruits meet r repentance.* Theſe, my *Brethren*, would be the atural effects of *Confirmation* duly and regularly ad-iniſter'd, and received; and if we ſee not theſe ffects from it, the blame ſhould not be thrown up-n ſo wiſe and good an ordinance, as uſeleſs and ſignificant, but we ſhould conclude, that the per-ns, who receive it, are not qualified and prepared

* Phil. i. 27.

for it in the manner they ought to be. Which brin
me to my

IV. Fourth general head, That I may ſhew y
what qualifications are requiſite in all perſons, w
deſire to be *confirmed*. The Church of *England* i
deed hath not determined any certain age for the
but ſuppoſeth in the title to the office of *Confirm*
tion, that they having been already *baptized*, ſhou
alſo "come to years of diſcretion: and in the r
bric after the *Catechiſm* it is ordered, "That ſo ſo
"as Children are come to a competent age, a
"can ſay in their Mother-Tongue the Creed, t
"Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, a
"alſo can anſwer to the other queſtions of the C
"*techiſm*, they ſhall be brought to the *Biſhop*".

It was indeed ſcarce poſſible to fix a certain ag
at which all *Children* ſhould * *come to years of diſcr*
tion, and be thus qualified for *Confirmation*; becau
their natural capacities will differ, and a carel
education may make ſome more backward in th
advances to religious knowledge, than othe
will be, whoſe natural capacities were equa
but have been more improved by learning. The
underſtanding and diſcretion therefore are not to
meaſured by their years, but by their apprehenſi
and judgment of things; for if any one be dilige
and virtuous, and have a ripeneſs of underſtandin
he may be admitted to *Confirmation* ſooner; for n
the age, but the fitneſs and manners of youth are
be regarded in this matter. And yet many perſo
are willing to interpret theſe directions of o
Church in an extraordinary latitude, and to prefe
their children for *Confirmation* almoſt while they ha

* Lyndwood *in his gloſs upon a conſtitution of Archbiſhop Wa*
ter determines no one to be adult, till he is above 14 *years of age.*
the

them in their arms; at leaſt while they are of a moſt incompetent age, as they themſelves would think, were their children at the ſame time put upon chuſing for themſelves in any temporal affair, tho' of no great importance.

But certainly *years of diſcretion*, and a *competent age*, muſt mean at leaſt, that the perſons who are to be *confirmed*, muſt be of ſuch an age, as to have a reaſonable ſenſe and underſtanding of the buſineſs they come about. They muſt be ſo well inſtructed in the principles of Chriſtianity, as fully to underſtand the nature of their *baptiſmal* vow, and their judgments muſt be ſo well ſettled, as to be capable of making a prudent and firm reſolution of believing and performing what was undertaken for them by their Sureties in *Baptiſm*. This is ſo plain from the reaſon of the thing, and from the nature and ends of *Confirmation*, that one would think it ſcarce poſſible for any to miſtake their duty in this caſe, had our Church been ſilent, and given no directions. And yet even after theſe directions ſome imagine, that Children are old, and fit enough, if they are able barely to *anſwer to the queſtions of the Catechiſm*. As if to *anſwer* ſignified no more, than to reply as Parrots do; but ſure the word muſt mean to have ſome ſenſe and underſtanding of what they ſpeak and undertake, ſuch as perſons ought to have when at *years of diſcretion*, and in the language of St. *Peter*, to be able and *ready always to give an anſwer to every man, that asketh* them *a reaſon of the hope that is in them* ‡. They ought to have a competent knowledge of the extent and obligation of all the duties of religion, and to have given good aſſurance of their reſolution to live ſuitably to that knowledge; be-

‡ 1 Pet. iii. 15.

cause the business they come upon is to renew a so
lemn covenant with God, "and with their own
"mouth and consent openly, before the Church, t
"ratify and confirm what their Godfathers and God
"mothers promised for them in Baptism"; and thi
upon self-conviction, that it is their duty and ever
lasting interest so to. All which is not the work o
a mechanical memory, but the sole business of th
understanding. Nothing therefore can be plainer
than that *Confirmation* is perverted in the use of it
by those who crowd to receive it, before they ar
prepared for it by a sufficient ripeness of understand
ing, and by a regular course of *catechising*; or be
fore they are capable of a reasonable service, and o
making a voluntary profession, a discreet choice, an
a well-grounded resolution.

And indeed to speak my own sentiments fully
and freely upon this point, none ought to be brough
to *Confirmation*, till they are so ripe both in years an
understanding, and their proficiency in christia
knowledge and practice is so great, as that they ar
fit to receive the holy communion immediately afte
it. But to give my private opinion the weight
wish it; I must appeal to another Rubrick of ou
Church, which enjoins' "that none shall be admit
"ted to the holy communion, until such time a
"they be *confirmed*, or be ready and desirous to b
"*confirmed*". And again, at the end of *Baptism of such as are of riper years*, it is declared to be "expedient
"that every person thus baptized should be *confirm*
"*ed* by the Bishop, so soon after his Baptism a
"conveniently may be; that so he may be admitte
"to the holy communion". And are not thes
plain intimations, nay, publick testimonies from ou
Church, that she looks upon this rite as preparator
to the receiving this sacrament, and instituted o
purpos

purpoſe to admit *adult Chriſtians* into full and perfect communion *.

But I ſhall ſay no more upon this head, than to adviſe all, who are qualified by their age and underſtanding, to come with a mind prepared by a ſeriouſneſs, devotion, and reverence ſuitable to the ſolemnity and conſequences of this ordinance, and not for faſhion ſake or company, as a thing of mere form, and outward ceremony. For was the *Confirmation* of *baptized* perſons attended with the ſame ſtrict examination, and received with the ſame religious regard, as in primitive times; there is all the reaſon in the world to believe, that it might have like good effects, and by the bleſſing of God prove moſt ſucceſsful in promoting true chriſtian piety and virtue in this degenerate age.

V. Nothing now remains, but in the *laſt* place to apply myſelf unto you by an exhortation ſuitable to the preſent occaſion of our meeting. And this ſhall be,

1. *Firſt*, Addreſſed to thoſe, who have already been *confirmed*. And what more immediately concerns them to be remember'd is, that if they prove falſe to thoſe promiſes, vows, and engagements, which they made of their own accord, and in the moſt ſolemn manner; their *Confirmation* will riſe in judgment againſt them, and the guilt of their ſins will be extremely aggravated by being committed in contempt and defiance of the moſt ſacred obligations, as well as after the moſt mature deliberation, and clearest conviction. So that I may ſpeak to them,

* *The Church of* England *having obliged none to receive the holy communion, till they are* of the age of ſixteen years, (Can. 112.) *ought we not to fix* years of diſcretion *to that time of life, unleſs children of extraordinary capacities or improvements?*

as

as *Joſhua* did unto the people of *Iſrael*, *Ye are w*
neſſes againſt yourſelves, that ye have choſen you
Lord to ſerve him *.

Let me therefore intreat you, *my Brethren*, of
to call to mind the wiſe choice, and *good profeſſi*
ye yourſelves once made *before many witneſſes*
remember the ſolemn engagements ye then l
upon your conſciences, and be ever careful in d
charging them with all good fidelity. Think n
that the vows of *Confirmation*, or the *gift of the H*
ly Ghoſt, will ſtand you in any ſtead; no, they w
be the moſt aggravating articles of your guilt, u
leſs they work in you ſuch laſting diſpoſitions
mind, as will afterwards, when temptations ſh
come on, preſerve you *ſtedfaſt and unmoveable*
your faith, and *always abounding in the work of*
Lord *. Ye have indeed been † *ſealed with t*
holy ſpirit of promiſe, which is the earneſt of your
heritance: but this will not ſecure you *until the d*
of redemption, if ye ‡ *grieve, reſiſt*, and force h
from you by your ſins. Ye cannot have any ti
or claim to the ‖ *exceeding great and precious promi*
of his grace, or to the rewards of the Goſpel, unl
ye conſpire with his influences, and *be partakers*
the divine nature, doing all ye can *to eſcape the c*
ruption that is in the world thro' luſt, and *holding*
beginning of your *confidence ſtedfaſt unto the end*
and beſides this giving all diligence, to *add to your fai*
virtue; *and to virtue, knowledge*; *and to knowled*
temperance; *and to temperance, patience*; *and to pa*

* Joſh. xxiv. 22.
‡ 1 Tim. vi. 12.
* 1 Cor. xv. 58.
† Eph. i. 13, 14.
‡ Eph. iv. 30.
‖ 2 Pet. i. 4—8.
¶ Heb. iii. 14.

ne, godlineſs; and to godlineſs, brotherly kindneſs; nd to brotherly kindneſs, charity. For theſe are ſo diſpenſibly the duties of our chriſtian profeſſion, hat he who *lacketh them*, cannot be ſaved. We uſt continue *faithful unto death*, if we expect the *own of life* ∴; for if we *draw back*, God's *ſoul will ave no pleaſure in us* *; *the latter end* will be *worſe ith us than the beginning*; *for it had been better for not to have known the way of righteouſneſs, than af-* we *have known it, to turn from the good profeſſion* f it, which we *profeſs'd* before God and *many wit-eſſes.*

2. But laſtly, I ſhall apply myſelf to thoſe young erſons, who, tho' *at years of diſcretion*, have not as yet olemnly devoted themſelves to God and Chriſt by the ows of *Confirmation.* And that which ye have to , my Brethren, is to call to mind, and to conſi-r the promiſes and engagements, "that were made in your name at your Baptiſm, and then ratify and confirm the ſame in your own perſons, by acknowledging yourſelves, before God, the Biſhop, and the Congregation, bound to believe and to do all thoſe things, which your Godfathers and Godmothers then undertook for you, and then to promiſe, that by the grace of God you will ever-more endeavour faithfully to obſerve them" For ithout this you ſeem to renounce the covenant that as made for you, to ſlight the ordinary miniſtries God's grace, and to *deny* your Saviour; and *who-ever ſhall deny* him, that is, *ſhall be* aſhamed *to con-ſs him*, and his *words before men in* an *adulterous d ſinful generation, of him ſhall the* Son of Man *be* amed, *when he cometh in the glory of his Father, ith the holy angels* †.

∴ Rev. ii. 10.
* Heb. x. 38. 2 Pet. ii. 20, 21.
† Matth. x. 33. Mark viii. 38.

Confi-

Consider farther, that ye are growing up into bad world, and without this care and preparation, must of necessity be left, at an age most liable sin, and least able to resist it, naked and defenceless against such a variety of temptations, as the b and wisest among the sons of men are scarce a mat for. Ye carry about you weak and corrupt natur so that ye cannot do any thing as of yourselves; b may most easily be betrayed into evil by treacherou appetites and passions. The world, the flesh, a the devil will be your constant enemies; and su they are, as you cannot think of overcoming wit out the powerful assistance of the divine Spir join'd to your own most deliberate and solemn re lutions: and if ye are conquered by these, certa and everlasting misery must ensue.

I hope therefore, that ye have well weighed a pondered these things with the concern and seriou ness ye ought: and that ye now come fully prepar to apply to your *heavenly Father for his holy Spirit* which will *come upon you* by the *laying on of han and prayer.* For by entring thus early, and th prepared, upon the duties of a christian life, ye wi by the grace of God, be able to resist every tem ptation; and by well settled principles of virtue a religion, ye will get betimes habits of doing wh ye ought, such habits, as ye cannot lose witho many uneasy and painful struggles. Nay, thus will form an alliance superior to all the enemies your Salvation, and to all the opposition ye can me with in this state of trial.

But to conclude with one general remark, th concerns us all. For I cannot but congratulate yo

* Luke xi. 13.

al

all, *my Brethren*, upon this ſolemn occaſion of our meeting; ſince I know not (and the wiſe * *Eraſmus* was of the ſame opinion) a more magnificent and pleaſing

* *The paſſage I refer to in* Eraſmus *relates indeed to another ſcheme; but as his views to the flouriſhing of* Chriſtianity *were the ſame as mine, his words will be no leſs applicable to* Confirmation *rightly adminiſter'd, than they are to his own ſcheme for promoting true piety and virtue: and ſo much of it I ſhall tranſcribe for the pleaſure and benefit of thoſe, who underſtand the original.* Illud mihi videtur non mediocriter ad hanc rem conducturum, ſi pueri baptizati, cum jam ad pubertatem pervenerint, jubeantur hujuſmodi concionibus adeſſe, in quibus illis dilucidè declaretur, quid in ſe contineat profeſſio *Baptiſmi*. Deindo diligenter examinentur à probis viris, ſatiſne teneant, ac meminerint ea, quæ docuit ſacerdos. Si comperientur ſatis tenere, interrogentur ratumne habeant, quod ſuſceptores illorum nomine polliciti ſunt in *Baptiſmo*. Si reſpondeant ſe ratum habere, tum publicè renovetur ea profeſſio, ſimul congregatis æqualibus, idque ceremoniis gravibus, aptis, caſtis, ſeriis, ac magnificis: quæque deceant eam profeſſionem, quâ nulla poteſt eſſe ſanctior.——Ita fiet, ut adoleſcentes intelligant, quid Principi ſuo præſtare debeant, & quibus ſtudiis eniti ad veram pietatem, & interim majoribus etiam ſuccurret, quot modis à ſuis votis exorbitârint. —Quam verò magnificum eſſet hoc ſpectaculum audire vocem tot juvenum ſeſe *Jeſu Chriſto* dedicantium, tot tironum in illius verba jurantium, abrenuntiantium huic mundo, qui totus in malitiâ poſitus eſt; abjurantium, & exſibilantium *Satanam* cum omnibus pompis, voluptatibus, & operibus ipſius?—— Audire vocem reliquæ multitudinis acclamantis, benéque ominantis *Chriſti* tironibus? Hæc ſic publicè fieri velim, ut nihilo ſegnius interim ab ipſis ſtatim incunabulis privatim ac publice *Chriſti* doctrinam imbibant, quantum fieri poteſt. Quæ quidem hoc plus habebunt auctoritatis, ſi tractentur per ipſos *Epiſcopos*, non per Parochos, aut conductos ſuffraganeos. Hæc ſi fierent, quemadmodum oporteret, aut ego fallor, aut haberemus aliquanto ſinceriores Chriſtianos quam habemus.——Hujuſmodi rudimentis qui fuerint inſtituti, non venient omnino rudes ad lectionem ſacrorum voluminum. Nunc multi ſunt quinquagenarij, qui neſciant quid voverint in *Baptiſmo*; qui ne ſomniarint quidem, quid ſibi

pleaſing ſight to a good Chriſtian, to one who h
really and paſſionately at his heart the intereſts
religion and virtue, than to ſee crowds of hopef
youths liſting themſelves in theſe bad days freel
publickly, and ſolemnly into the ſervice of the
Creator and Redeemer, ſwearing all faithful alleg
ance and duty to them, and reſolving with o
mouth and one ſoul to fight under their banne
againſt the fleſh, the world, and the Devil. Na
ſurely *there muſt be joy in the preſence of the angels i
heaven* to ſee theſe excellent ſervants of *God*, an
of his *Chriſt* †, *forgetting thoſe things which are be
hind, and reaching forth unto thoſe things which ar
before*, preſſing with all zeal and pains *toward th
mark, for the prize of the high calling of God i
in Chriſt Jeſus*: and as an earneſt of their victor
receiving with devout and cheerful gratitude the ſea
of God's holy Spirit; which will enable them t
‡ *wreſtle not only againſt fleſh and blood, but again
principalities, againſt powers, againſt the rulers of th
darkneſs of this world, againſt ſpiritual wickedneſs i
high places*: which will carry them with triumph
thro' all the trials of this life, making them *mor
than Conquerors*, tho' *the wicked join hand in han
againſt them*; till they ſhall *finiſh* their *courſe wit
joy*, and then expire, without any fears of death, i

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velint articuli fidei, quid precatio Dominica, quid Eccleſi
ſacramenta. —— Titulo, conſuetudinibus, ceremonijs Chri
ſtiani ſumus, magis quam ex animo. —— Non deſinit & ho
die ſuos docere *Jeſus*. —— Effudit olim *Spiritum* ſuum in diſ
cipulos, neque nunc eſt abbreviata manus Domini: neque
defecit *Spiritûs* illius vis in animis piorum: quem ut merea
mur accipere, faciamus quod olim fecerunt diſcipuli. *See* E
raſmus's *preface to* Pio lectori *before his Paraphraſe on St.* Mat
thew.

† Phil. iii. 13.

‡ Eph. vi 12.

a tranſ

mſporting expectation of that *crown of righteouſ-*
, which is *laid up* for them in heaven, and which
Lord, *the righteous judge, ſhall give them at that*
, *when he ſhall come to be glorified in his ſaints.*

Among which happy number, that we may be all
d, *God* of his infinite mercy grant thro' the
its of his *Son*, and the aſſiſtances of his *Holy*
it; to whom *be bleſſing, and glory, and wiſdom,*
thankſgiving, and honour for ever and ever.
en.

FINIS.



Publiſh'd by the ſame AUTHOR,

THE labours of a Chriſtian Miniſter, together wi his reward. A Viſitation-Sermon preached *Daventry*, July 19. 1723.

The miraculous ſucceſs of the Goſpel in its fi preaching, a good proof of its divine Origin and A thority. An Ordination-Sermon preached in St. *Mar garet's, Weſtminſter*, May 23. 1725.

PRAYERS recommended for ſuch *Occaſions*, by Archbiſhop TENISON.

A private Prayer, which may be uſed by one who intends to be Confirmed.

O Almighty GOD and merciful Father, thro' whoſe *gracious providence* over me, I have been *admitted* into thy *Church* by *Baptiſm*; Pardon, I beſeech thee, all my former *breaches* of that holy *Covenant* which I then entred into: And now that I intend to ratify my *Baptiſmal Vow* in my own Perſon, ſo ſtrengthen me with all the Graces of thy Holy Spirit, that I may make *open profeſſion* of thy holy religion all the days of my life: and ſo *ſpeak*, and *think*, and *live*, as becomes a *true member* of CHRIST. Give me *grace* to mortify all my evil and corrupt affections, and daily to proceed in all virtue, and

godliness of living, till I at last attain the end of my hopes, even the salvation of my Soul, through the merits of JESUS CHRIST our Lord. *Amen.*

A Prayer which may be used by one who is going to be Confirmed, *immediately before the office begins.*

BLESSED be thy name, O LORD, that I was *born* in a *Christian* land, and admitted into thy *Church* by Baptism, and have lived to a capacity of ratifying and confirming my *Baptismal Vow* in my own *person*. Lord, I heartily take that *solemn* engagement on my self; I renounce all sins, the works of the Devil, and worldly vanities, and sensual lusts; I heartily believe thy holy religion, and sincerely profess constantly to endeavour to obey thy laws: and I earnestly implore the assistance of thy *grace* and *Spirit*, to enable me to keep these *resolutions*, thro' JESUS CHRIST my Lord. *Amen.*

A form of Thankſgiving, *which may be privately uſed after* Confirmation.

O Moſt gracious GOD, who keepeſt *covenant* with them that love thee, and walk before thee with all their hearts; I adore and praiſe thy holy name, for the great *goodneſs* which thou haſt ſhewn me ever ſince I was born. I bleſs thee, in eſpecial manner, for *receiving* me into the *congregation* of *Chriſt*'s flock, and preſerving my life, till I have enjoyed this opportunity of *ratifying* in my own *perſon* the *ſolemn Vow* made in my name by my *ſureties* at my Baptiſm. O do thou, by the grace of thy Holy Spirit, which accompanieth the *ordinances* of thy *Church*, ſo purify my heart, and guide all the motions of it, that I may always lead a *godly* and a *chriſtian* life. Grant, that being directed by his holy influence, I may conſtantly profeſs thy *Truth* unto my life's end, and keep a *conſcience void of offence towards thee and towards men*, and in all things order my converſation aright: that ſo having been planted by *Baptiſm* in the *likeneſs* of *Chriſt*'s death, and having walked in *newneſs* of

of life in the *likeneſs* of his *Reſurrection*, I may at length partake of that *Life* and *Immortality* which he brought to *light* thro' the *Goſpel*, who liveth and reigneth with thee and the Holy Ghoſt, one GOD, world without end. *Amen.*

FINIS.